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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



LETTER

OF

LIEUT. GOV. STANTON,

Benjamin

IN REPLY TO

HON. THOS. EWING.

COLUMBUS:

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1862.

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LETTER.

BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO, November 4th, 1862.

HON. THOMAS EWING — SIR : — Your letter dated October 4th, 1862, was received in the form of a printed pamphlet of twenty-four pages, some ten days after its date.

I regret exceedingly that you should have deemed it your duty to make yourself a party to a controversy in which Gen. Sherman has involved himself, without any necessity or excuse.

He was not the Commander-in-Chief of the army at Shiloh, and was not named in any communication of mine as one of the officers who were responsible for the surprise, while other Generals were named. If therefore he finds himself worsted, the occasion does not justify you in coming to his aid, and making yourself a party to a controversy which he has unnecessarily provoked.

From early life I have been accustomed to entertain the highest regard for your talents and character. It is therefore a matter of extreme regret to find myself compelled to engage in a public controversy with you, in a matter of so much interest, or to sacrifice my convictions of the truth of history, for the purpose of avoiding it.

Your letter assumes to be in reply to my charges against our Generals, who commanded at the battle of Shiloh, and professes to be prompted by a disinterested regard for the truth of history.

If you had said in your letter that Gen. Sherman was your son-in-law, it would have enabled the public to judge with more accuracy how far your patriotism and sense of justice was stimulated by a desire to protect and defend the reputation of a member of your own family, and how it happens that Gen. Sherman is made by your letter so decidedly the hero of the battle, while Generals Grant and Prentiss are only casually and incidentally mentioned.

I could excuse Gen. Sherman for referring to my official position as giving me such prominence as warranted him in condescending to notice me. He is a soldier, and perhaps not familiar with the powers and duties of the office I happen to hold, and may have supposed that it gave me some power or position. But no man knows better than you that so long as the Governor is in office, it

gives neither power, honor or profit, and that anything I may say, derives not one particle of additional significance, or importance, from the fact that I happen to hold the office to which you refer.

You were President of the Convention by which I was nominated for this position, and know that I accepted it with reluctance, and only because no man of such character and position as was desired for that place upon the ticket, would accept it.

You therefore have no excuse for referring to my official position as an excuse for replying to what I have said upon this subject.

I have been somewhat at a loss to imagine why I should be selected as the person to be held responsible for a charge that was in everybody's mouth, published in every newspaper from Portland to San Francisco, *and not denied by anybody for more than ten days after the battle.*

I suppose, however, that the true reason is to be found in what you choose to denominate my "extreme innocence of military knowledge." It was supposed that my ignorance of military affairs would give to Gen. Sherman and yourself an easy victory over me in the discussion of a question of military science. The public has probably determined before this time, how far Gen. Sherman's expectations have been realized. When this letter has been published, the means of judging how much more successful you have been, will be before the public.

I should be glad to know by what authority you charge that I "had no means of acquiring correct information," when I wrote my report of the 28th of April to the Governor, or when I wrote my letter to the "Mac-a-cheek Press," of which you and Gen. Sherman complain.

I had stated my means of acquiring correct information in my letter to Gen. Sherman. And it will not do for you or any other person to say that the officers and men with whom I conversed, were not capable of giving me correct information. I certainly heard a great many things that probably were not true, and to which I gave no credit. But when a statement of a matter of fact was made to me, by a General or Colonel, or any other brave and truthful man, not contradicted by any body, and consistent with notorious facts, I know no reason why I should not believe it.

I heard the report of one of the Generals read in manuscript on the battle ground, and propounded to him, divers interrogatories upon the matters discussed in his report. You have his report as published in the Public Documents.

I have in addition, the facts developed by my cross-examination. I had the statements of numerous Generals, and Colonels of the part taken by their Divisions, Brigades, and Regiments in the battle, and in almost every instance propounded such questions as were necessary to enable me thoroughly to understand them. The localities in which they occurred were pointed out to me upon the ground, so that I was enabled to understand them much more thoroughly than I could have done if I had not been upon the battle ground.

The truth is that my opportunities for "acquiring correct information," have been a vast deal better than yours, after all the "care" you have bestowed upon the subject. My ability to "appreciate the bearing of the facts" that came to my knowledge, is a question I am entirely willing to submit to the public when our correspondence is published.

I do not recognize the soundness of your proposition, that whether my reports were true or false, their publication could produce only evil. All public functionaries, civil and military, are responsible either directly or indirectly to the people.

If a collector of public moneys, appointed by the President and removable at his pleasure, steals the public money, and the President with knowledge of his guilt, continues him in office, he makes himself responsible for the crime. So if the President puts a man at the head of an Army who sacrifices the lives of his men, and disgraces the country, by his negligence or incompetence, and the President continues him in his command, or promotes him, the President is guilty of a grave error for which he must answer to the people. The people have a right to know the whole truth, in relation to the conduct and qualifications of the men who command the armies in which their sons and brothers are serving. Neither you nor I have any right to conceal from them any of the perils of service in which we ask them to engage. We have no right by false pretences, or fraudulent concealment, to inveigle men into the service, without disclosing to them every fact known to us, that may enhance its perils.

If men occupying so exalted a position as you, are found advocating concealment, and keeping the people in ignorance of the real character of the officers under whom they are to serve, its effect must be to impair their confidence in the Government, and make them feel less anxious about its maintenance and support.

Let the idea be generally disseminated amongst the people, that the Government is under the control of some sinister and selfish

influence, that cares more for the reputation of some favorite General, than for the lives of a thousand men, and they will care very little for the support of such a Government. I know of no better way of disseminating such an idea, than for prominent and distinguished public men to urge the concealment of the truth of history from the people, lest a knowledge of the truth should prevent them from going into the service.

The President must take cognizance of facts that are known to every body else, and he has power to make such inquiries as may be necessary to satisfy his own mind, as to the character and qualifications of the Generals who command our armies, and he must visit the unworthy with prompt and stern condemnation and removal from their commands. This is the country's only hope for relief, from the load of titled imbecility under which it is now groaning.

Your letter is in reply to my letter to Gen. Sherman, and you profess to review the proofs of surprise given by me in that letter. You will recollect that in that letter, after giving the statements of a few persons, of facts which came under their observation, I stated that I could multiply that kind of proof indefinitely, and that much evidence might be found to contradict these statements; and therefore as such conflicting evidence could not be satisfactory or conclusive, I would leave it, and rely upon undisputed facts, which in my judgment established the surprise beyond controversy. I then stated that we had no defensive works, no entrenchments or rifle pits, no cannon mounted, not even a tree cut down to defend us against an attack. It was argued that if the attack was expected, some preparations for defence should have been made. If the attack was not expected, it was a surprise. In reply to this, you say just nothing at all.

I said the rebels encamped in force on Saturday night, within hearing of our drums and bugles, while our Generals had no idea that they were any where in striking distance.

In reply to this you make an issue with me about the distance the rebels encamped from our lines on Saturday night. You quote me as saying it was a mile and a half. You say it was three miles. It is not a matter of the slightest consequence which is right, and I will not discuss any such immaterial issues.

The essential and material fact is that the enemy encamped in force on Saturday night within easy striking distance of our lines, and our Generals remained in total ignorance of that material and important

fact. This I charged was negligence. In reply to this you say the wounded rebels who told me that they had encamped within a mile and a half of our lines were "rogues," who were lying to me.

This will not do. This was negligence or it was not. The question is essential to the settlement of the controversy between us, and must be answered.

You insist upon holding me strictly to the letter of the original charge. To this I certainly have no objection. But it is not in accordance with my practice in criminal cases, where I have an innocent and honest client. But where I am defending a rascal, I am sometimes compelled to resort to such shifts. If he is indicted for burglary, I insist upon it that the proof makes a case of larceny, and if the indictment is for larceny, I claim that the case made is burglary. But if I have an honest client, I scorn all technical subtleties, and demand an acquittal on the ground that he has done no wrong—committed no crime. But as you have declared your purpose to avail yourself of a variance between the indictment and the proof, I will address myself to that question.

My charge is all included in the single sentence: "The disasters of Sunday, April 6th, were the result of surprise, which is justly chargeable on the commanding officers."

Our army of 38,000 men was attacked by 40,000 rebels, driven from their camps a distance of two miles, to the shelter of our gunboats upon the river, with the loss in killed and wounded of fully 10,000 men, and an immense amount of artillery and material of war. This disaster is clearly attributable to the incompetence and negligence of the officers, or the cowardice of the men. I say it was the negligence of the officers. You say it was the cowardice of the men.

In support of your case, you rely solely on the statements of your clients, made in writing, giving a detailed account of the part which each of them took in the battle. Every one of them knew perfectly well when they were making their statements, that if they admitted a state of facts which showed a surprise, that they were not only disgraced, but were liable to be dismissed from the service and punished.

My clients are not permitted to make official reports to exonerate themselves from the charge of cowardice, and have them filed away in the Archives of the Government.

I think you will hardly claim that your testimony is specially impartial or disinterested, and I certainly may apply to it the rule which is applicable to pleadings in civil causes, that every pleading

shall be construed most strongly against the party pleading it. Bearing this in mind, I propose to look at some of the proofs which you quote.

At page 11 of your letter you quote General Sherman's report as follows: "About 8 o'clock, A. M., I saw the glittering bayonets of large masses of Infantry in the woods beyond a small stream, and became satisfied that the enemy designed a determined attack on our whole camp."

This is given in quotation marks, to show that you are making a literal quotation, and not merely giving the substance of the sentence.

Now if you will turn to Gen. Sherman's official report, you will find between the word "satisfied" and the word "that," near the close of the extract, these important and significant words, "*for the first time.*" That is, at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning was the first time he believed the enemy intended a determined attack upon our whole line, and then the battle had been raging in front of Colonel Hildebrand's Brigade for more than half an hour.

At page 8, you make a quotation from Col. Stewart's report as Commandant of the 2d Brigade, which closes with these words in italics: "*The disposition of my pickets was reported to and approved by Gen. Sherman.*"

If you will turn to the official report you will see that you have stopped in the middle of a sentence, and mutilated it and destroyed its meaning. In the report, the following words are added to complete the sentence: "At 7½ o'clock on Sunday morning," making the sentence read: "The disposition of my pickets was reported to and approved by Gen. Sherman at 7½ o'clock on Sunday morning."

You will see that these material omissions in your quotations are very unfortunate. They may lead evil minded and suspicious persons to suspect you of a design to garble and pervert the meaning of the reports.

So it seems that at 7½ o'clock, on Sunday morning, Gen. Sherman was receiving reports of the disposition of pickets, and approving or condemning, as his judgment dictated.

It will be necessary to enable the reader to understand the application of the proofs you have referred to, as well as what I have to offer, to have some idea of the disposition of our forces. The Army was encamped on the west bank of the Tennessee, between Lick Creek on the South, and Owl Creek on the North, and extending out from the river, up Lick Creek on the left, and Owl Creek on the

right, about three miles. The centre of the line was thrown forward further in front than the wings, which gave it a sort of Crescent shape. Three Brigades, the 1st, 3d and 4th, of Sherman's Division were on the extreme right, resting on Owl Creek. His second was on the extreme left, resting on Lick Creek. Between General Sherman's 1st, 3d and 4th Brigades on the right, and his 2d Brigade on the left, was Gen. Prentiss' Division. These two Divisions, containing some 14,000 or 15,000 men, occupied an entire front, which was nearly three miles in length.

In the rear of Gen. Sherman's, three Brigades on the right, was Gen. McClelland's Division; in the rear of Gen. Prentiss was Gen. Hurlburt's Division, and in the rear of Gen. Hurlburt's Division, near the landing, was Gen. Smith's Division, commanded by Brigadier General W. H. H. Wallace, on account of the sickness of Gen. Smith. Gen. Sherman's 1st Brigade was composed of the 6th Iowa Reg., Col. McDowell; 40th Ill., Col. Hicks, and the 46th Ohio, Col. Worthington; his 2d, of the 55th Ill., Col. Stewart, 54th Ohio, Col. T. Kirby Smith, and the 71st Ohio, Col. R. Mason; his 3d, of the 77th Ohio, Col. Hildebrand; 53d Ohio, Col. Appler, and the 57th Ohio, Col. Mungen; his 4th, of the 72d Ohio, Col. Buckland; 48th Ohio, Col. Sullivan, and the 70th Ohio, Col. Cockerell.

From the extreme right on Owl Creek, to the extreme left on Lick Creek, the distance is between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 miles. The 1st and 4th Brigades of Sherman's Division were to the right of Shiloh Church and the Corinth road, which crossed our lines at the Church. The 57th Ohio formed the right of the 3d Brigade of Gen. Sherman's Division, and rested its right upon the Corinth road. The 70th Ohio, Col. Cockerell, formed the left of the 4th Brigade, and rested its left upon the Corinth road, which separated it from the 57th Ohio. Shiloh Church is situated on the Corinth road at the point where it crossed our lines. Hence it will be seen that an enemy advancing upon us by the Corinth road, would first come in contact with the 57th and 70th Ohio, and with the 3d and 4th Brigades of Sherman's Divisions, commanded by Colonels Hildebrand and Buckland.

The 57th Ohio was commanded by Lt. Col. Rice, who made no report of the part taken by his Regiment in the battle. Col. Hildebrand says in his report, page 76 :

"Early on the morning of Sunday the 6th inst., our pickets were fired on, and shortly after 7 o'clock, the enemy appeared in force, presenting him'

self in columns of Regiments at least four deep. HE OPENED UPON OUR CAMP A HEAVY FIRE FROM INFANTRY, WHICH WAS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY SHELLS. Having formed my Brigade in line of battle, I ordered an advance. The 77th and 57th were thrown forward to occupy a certain position, but encountered the enemy in force within three hundred yards of our Camp. Unfortunately we were not supported by Artillery, and were compelled to retire under cover of our Camp, the engagement becoming general along the entire front of my command."

You quote this sentence, and say "the report of Col. Hildebrand is not exact as to the order of events," etc.

It relates events in the order in which they occurred. 1st: His pickets were fired on. 2d: The enemy appeared in force, etc. 3d: He opened on *our Camp a heavy fire* from Infantry, which was immediately followed by shells. 4th: He formed his Brigade in order of battle, and ordered an advance. 5th: The 77th and 57th were thrown forward to occupy a certain position, and met the enemy in force within three hundred yards of his Camp.

This is substantially the account given me by the officers and men of the 57th, the Sunday after the battle. One company of that Regiment was recruited in this county, and I was well acquainted with the officers and many of the men. They told me that the attack was made, and their tents fired into without any notice, while many of the men were eating their breakfasts.

I do not propose to name the officers or men who told me so, and thereby point them out to Gen. Sherman, who still commands them, as proper subjects of resentment. But if you will give me a tribunal that has power to administer oaths, and compel the attendance of witnesses, I will furnish a cloud of witnesses, who will testify to the facts I have stated. But they are not needed. Col. Hildebrand states the facts precisely as they occurred. His camp was fired into, and then, and not till then, he formed his Brigade in line of battle.

Col. Cockerell of the 70th Ohio says in his report; Ex. Doc. 66, p. 65:

"On Sunday morning, April 6, 1862, an alarm was made in front of this Brigade, and I CALLED MY REGIMENT FROM BREAKFAST, and formed it in line of battle on color line. I then heard heavy firing on the left and in front of our lines," etc.

This firing on the left, and in front was doubtless the heavy Infantry firing, and firing with shell upon the Camp of Col. Hildebrand, spoken of in his report. So sudden and unexpected was it, that his Regiment was at breakfast, and they were called away, leaving their breakfasts unfinished.

Gen. Sherman says in his letter to me, that the 57th Regiment

occupied the very key to this position, and if its front was not well guarded it was the fault of the officers of the Regiment.

These reports of Col. Hildebrand and Col. Cockerell, are corroborated by the reports of officers in other parts of the Camp.

The 2d Brigade of Gen. Sherman's Division was on the extreme left, fully two miles from Hildebrand's Brigade, and was not attacked until some time after the attack by Shiloh Church on the Corinth road.

Col. Stewart commanding this Brigade, says :

"The disposition of my pickets was reported to and approved by Gen. Sherman at 7 ½ o'clock on Sunday morning. I received a verbal message from Gen. Prentiss, that the enemy were in his front in force. Soon after, my pickets sent word that a force with Artillery were advancing by the 'Back Road.' In a very short time I discovered the Pelican flag advancing to the rear of Gen. Prentiss' Headquarters."

From this it appears that the officers on the extreme left were quietly reporting the disposition of their pickets, unconscious of any danger, and the first that Col. Stewart saw of the enemy was the Pelican flag in the rear of Gen. Prentiss' Headquarters, whose flank had already been turned without his being aware of it; for it was Col. Stewart, and not Gen. Prentiss who sent to Gen. Hurlburt for re-inforcements.

Capt. Barrett, commanding Co. B. 1st Regiment Illinois Artillery. says :

"We were stationed near the outposts, and on the alarm being given at about half-past seven o'clock on Sunday morning, the Battery was promptly got in readiness, and in ten minutes thereafter, commenced firing on the right of the Log Church, some 100 yards in front of Gen. Sherman's Headquarters, where the attack was made by the enemy in great force."

So it seems that in ten minutes after the alarm was given, the enemy made an attack "in great force" within 100 yards of Gen. Sherman's Headquarters.

Col. Pugh, commanding the 1st Brigade, 4th Division, says ;

"Early on Sunday morning, April 6th, while I WAS AT BREAKFAST, I heard heavy firing in front. I immediately ordered out the 41st Illinois volunteers, who were in line in ten minutes, and at the same time I ordered my horse, and by the time I was mounted, I received orders from Col. Williams, 3d Iowa, commanding the 1st Brigade, 4th Division, to take my position on the left of the Brigade, which I did," etc.

Col. Logan, 32d Illinois volunteers says he formed his Regiment in line of battle on the color line of his encampment at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning. The battle had certainly been raging for half an hour before his line of battle was formed.

Lieut. Col. Parker, 48th Ohio, in the 4th Brigade of Gen. Sherman's Division, says :

“On the morning of the 6th, our Regiment met the enemy about 200 yards in front of our color line; they came upon us so suddenly that for a short time our men retreated, but soon rallied again, when we kept him back for two hours, and until Gen. Sherman ordered us to fall back to the Purdy road. Although this Regiment was in line of battle, 200 yards in front of their camp, yet it is perfectly apparent, that they started out on a mere reconnoissance, and were completely surprised at meeting the enemy in force within less than half musket range of their Camp.”

Col. Veatch commanding the 2d Brigade, 4th Division, says :

“On Sunday morning WHILE MOST OF THE TROOPS WERE AT BREAKFAST, heavy firing was heard ON OUR LINES in a direction South-west from my Camp.”

The course from whence the firing came, shows that it refers to the attack upon the left of Gen. Prentiss' Division, and not to the earlier attack at Shiloh Church.

Col. Davis of the 46th Illinois, says :

“That on Sunday morning the 6th inst., about 7½ o'clock, the enemy's fire was first heard in my camp, WHEREUPON I warned my men to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice,” etc.

They were not in line of battle then when the attack commenced.

Col. Bristow, 25th Kentucky Volunteers, says :

“About 7 o'clock on the morning of the 6th, a rapid and heavy firing of artillery and musketry was heard to our front, and in five minutes we received orders to form in line of battle in front of our camp.”

Col. McHenry, 17th Kentucky, says :

“My regiment was ordered into line early on Sunday the 6th inst., UPON A SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED ATTACK upon our front lines by the enemy. * * * Being on the left of the brigade, we were posted about one mile in front of our camp, near the right of an open field, which was immediately in rear of a portion of the camp of Gen. Prentiss, WHICH WAS AT THAT TIME OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY.”

So it seems that before this regiment could form and take its position after the “sudden and unexpected” attack upon our front lines, the enemy was in possession of Gen. Prentiss' camp.

Lieut. Brotzman, commanding Manns' Missouri Battery, says :

“That on the 6th of April, at about half-past 7 o'clock, A. M., I heard a continuous fire of Infantry and Artillery on the right wing of our army, and in consequence thereof, I ordered the battery to be ready to move as quick as possible.”

It was in consequence of the attack, and not in pursuance of orders that he ordered his battery to be ready to move as quick as possible.

Col. Worthington, of the 46th Ohio, made the following entry in his diary under date of April 6th, 1862 :

“A clear cool morning. Rode out to the pickets at sunrise, and soon after the enemy were seen advancing past the Howell House. Directly one of Col. Hiek's regiment, 40th Illinois, was shot through the heart at not less than 400 yards. Rode to McDowell's quarters (not up), and then back to the pickets, and ordered the men who had fallen back, to advance to the Howell fence. Returned to camp for preparation, and at about

seven A. M., the attack commenced on Hildebrand's and Buckland's brigade. This might have been expected, but we were really not ready for a fight. No hospitals at Pittsburg, nor even means to carry off the wounded."

Col. Worthington, in a letter to Gen. Halleck, dated July 11, 1862, says :

"I hold General W. T. Sherman responsible for the condition of the army at Shiloh, up to the 7th of April, and besides what occurred in his own Division, for everything arising out of that condition, directly or indirectly. And for this reason, that to him was confided the advance of the expedition of Tennessee. * * * He (General Sherman), had or might have had almost perfect means of knowing from day to day, whatever occurred at Corinth, or among the rebels near there. He might have controlled the position of all the five Divisions at Shiloh. His request or remonstrance, would have been equally regarded or acted upon. * * * So far as Gen. Sherman's handling of his Division is concerned, it is as bad as it well could be; 1st. That with twelve regiments and three batteries, but five regiments and two batteries were used to repel the first attack at 8 A. M.; Appler's 53d Ohio, being so isolated that it could neither give or receive support; and Stuart's Brigade being in the same condition. 2d. That the first brigade was utterly ignored, when it might have sooner and easier decided the fate of the day, than at length it did. 3d. That Behrs' battery which might have been drawn off with the first brigade, was thrown into the victorious path of the rebels, one gun only excepted. 4th. THAT THE ARTILLERY WAS NOT IN POSITION UNTIL HALF AN HOUR AFTER THE ATTACK COMMENCED; that neither battery was on either flank of his center, and oddly enough that the only battery (Behrs') which could and should have delivered a most effective flank fire at short range, was left idle till given up as above stated."

I have no room for further extracts, except for his conclusions, which are given as follows :

"The conclusion, so far as General Sherman is concerned from the above statements are, his utter disregard of the immediate and obvious indications of an attack after Friday noon, as shown by his leaving all things as they were. 2d. His utter disregard of his Artillery with respect more especially to its ammunition; 3d. His failing to make any provision for his wounded and sick men; 4th. His fatuity in leaving useless his right brigade, to say nothing of his left, either of which might, if thrown upon either rebel flank, have driven back the attack even as late as eight o'clock A. M. 5th. His unaccountable sacrifice of five guns of Behr's battery, when the whole might have been saved, as one gun was preserved with the first Brigade; 6th. His useless and reckless waste of life in the charge of Col. Hicks' 40th Illinois Regiment; 7th. His so hastily leaving the weakest, and most exposed part of his line, when his presence would seem most needed; and 8th. The fact of his leaving such a point so exposed, present the strongest salients in his connection with the battle of Shiloh on the 6th day of April, 1862."

Wm. G. Stevenson, (a son of Rev. John Stevenson,) who was raised within a mile of this village, and who I believe is now Secretary of the American Tract Society in New York, happened to be in Arkansas at the breaking out of this rebellion. He was pressed into the rebel service, and compelled to go into the rebel army on pain of instant death. He was an aid of Gen. Breckinridge at the

battle of Shiloh, and has since found his way to the North, and published an account of his services in rebeldom, under the title of "Thirteen Months in the Rebel Army."

His position gave him opportunities for being perfectly familiar with the movements and plans and purposes of the rebels.

In his account of the battle of Shiloh, he says:

"While it is no part of my duty in this narrative to criticise military movements, and especially those of the Union forces, I may state, that the total absence of cavalry pickets from Gen. Grant's army was a matter of perfect amazement to the rebel officers. There were absolutely none on Grant's left, where Gen. Breckinridge's Division was meeting him, so THAT WE WERE ABLE TO COME UP WITHIN HEARING OF THEIR DRUMS ENTIRELY UNPERCEIVED. The Infantry pickets of Grant's forces were not above three-fourths of a mile from his advanced camps, and they were too few to make any resistance. With these facts all made known to our Headquarters, our army was arrayed for battle with the certainty of a surprise, and almost the assurance of victory."

The statement of Mr. Stevenson corroborates in every particular the statements of the rebel prisoners referred to in my letter to Gen. Sherman, and I see no reason to doubt their accuracy.

Gen. Beauregard says that the rebel army encamped at the intersection of the Pittsburgh and Hamburg roads on the night before the battle, which he says was four miles from Pittsburgh Landing. Our front lines were full three miles from Pittsburgh Landing, which makes the rebel camps within one mile of our lines. Your quotations from the reports of the officers commanding in the battles show that many of them had their regiments and brigades drawn up in line of battle and advanced to meet the enemy before they were attacked.

I have no doubt of it. I did not say that our lines were attacked at all points at once, and before any part of our forces were aware of the approach of the enemy.

The attack by way of the Corinth road at Shiloh Church, was made before the enemy reached any other part of our lines. The firing at that point alarmed the whole camp, and the troops at other points were drawn up in line of battle before they were attacked.

But the proofs I have given show that our camps were fired into in Col. Hildebrands's brigade before he was aware of the approach of the enemy, that Gen. Prentiss' left wing was turned within a few minutes afterwards, and that we were thrown into confusion and our lines broken, in a few minutes after the commencement of the battle.

But I repeat now what I said in my letter to General Sherman: If there is a conflict of testimony which leaves any doubt upon the

subject, there is undisputed facts, which put the matter beyond controversy.

1st. The rebels encamped within striking distance of us on the night before the battle, while our Generals supposed they were still at Corinth.

2d. No preparation for defence was made. No entrenchments were made, no rifle pits were dug, no timber was cut, or abattis constructed to protect us against an attack.

You say there was no surprise. In what position do you place General Sherman and the other Generals in command?

You claim that they used all the vigilance and caution which their situation and circumstances required. If so, they must have known that the enemy were advancing upon them in force. At all events, they ought reasonably to have apprehended an attack.

I again invite your attention to Col. Worthington's diary in this view of the subject. He commences:

"Wednesday, the 26th of March, 1862, at Camp Shiloh, three miles from Pittsburgh Landing. A company being called for picket duty, detailed Capt. Sharp's Company—B. Indications of an attack, if the country people are to be believed. Their pickets are around and too near us, showing a strong effective force.

Thursday, March 27, 1862. This afternoon two of Sharp's pickets were fired on by the rebel horse, about 4½ P. M., not a mile from Camp. A disgrace to the Army that such should be the case, and an indication that they are covering some forward movement, yet Sherman is as improvident as ever, and takes no defensive, and scarce any precautionary measures. He snubs me and has no time to hear even a suggestion.

Friday, March 28th, 1862. Having suggested to McDowell the sending out of a stronger picket, he ordered thirty more men, which were immediately volunteered. If Beauregard does not attack us, he and the chivalry are disgraced forever, if for nothing else.

"Saturday, March 29, 1862. Sherman has refused to sign a requisition for seventy-two axes for my regiment, making it twenty-two, and while a slight abattis might prevent or avert an attack, there are no axes to make it, nor is there a sledge or crowbar in his Division, and scarce a set of tools out of my Regiment.

Monday, March 31st, 1862. Further indications through the pickets that an attack is imminent, and though I do not fear the result, a sudden attack, if violently made as it will be, may throw us back for months. The men are discouraged at our delay here, and the close vicinity of the rebel pickets which should be driven off. Sherman is inviting an attack, which I hope may occur, but for which we are unprepared.

"Tuesday, April 1st, 1862. Have now over one hundred rounds of ammunition for all available men, and feel easy on that point. Ordered the Captains to send in accounts of clothing and material, which the Quartermaster is very careless about getting. Still no axes, which he cannot now get if he would, and which are worth more than guns at present.

"Thursday, April 3d, 1862. Rode to Pittsburg Landing. The place is crowded and in disorder below, with noise and gambling above, across the road from the Post Office. Hunted up and down for clothing and axes, and found that Sherman had forbidden his Quartermaster from receiving anything. That Gen. Smith's Quartermaster will answer no requisition

outside of his immediate command, and the Post Quartermaster Baxter, (Grant's) will only answer the requisitions of the Division Quartermasters.

* * * * *

"The indications are still for attack, which I have also indicated to McDowell. We should now have on our right at least six batteries, and two regiments of Cavalry to warn the rear. With thick woods before us and pickets scarce a mile out, we have no defenses whatever, and no means of giving an alarm but by the sound of musketry. The troops cover too much ground and cannot support each other, and a violent attack which we may expect, may drive them back in detail. God help us with so many sick men in camp, if we are attacked, there being over five thousand unfit for duty.

"Friday, April 4, 1862. One of McDowell's pickets was shot in the hand about noon. A detail of Taylor's Cavalry was sent out three or four miles, found four to six hundred rebel Cavalry and fell back, returning about 2 P. M. Every thing is carried on in a very negligent way, and nothing but the same conduct on the other side will save us from disaster. They can concentrate one hundred thousand men from the heart of rebeldom, and with three or four railroads, and have far greater facilities for handling troops than we have. Have Brigade orders to stack arms at daylight till further orders. Keep two companies lying on their arms, and though as quiet as possible, look for an attack every hour.

"Saturday, April 5, 1862. Rode out to Sharp's pickets at sunrise, and found two men, (rebel pickets) wounded yesterday, who died last night at the widow Howell's. About 7 o'clock, A. M., the rebels drove in Lieut. Craig from the widow Howell's, getting possession of their dead men. Heard in the evening that the rebels had established three guns (six pounders) opposite Hildebrand's Brigade on our left, across the valley. Hear of five of their regiments arriving to-day."

I have already given the entry of Sunday, April 6th, in Col. Worthington's Diary. Why were all these warnings disregarded? You say he was not surprised, but expected an attack. Why then did he refuse to permit Col. Worthington to have axes to prepare defenses for his own regiment?

I do not believe he was disloyal, and desired our defeat, though this record might well give rise to such a suspicion. I believe it was simply the result of that arrogance, obstinacy and self-sufficiency, which is characteristic of little minds.

He would not adopt the suggestion of a subordinate officer, lest he should lose the credit and honor of originating his plans himself. And these facts are not to be got rid of by whistling Col. Worthington down the wind, and impeaching his character and veracity.

Col. Worthington is a son of Ex-Governor Worthington, is a graduate of West Point, is now fifty-four years old, and withal a high-toned, high-minded, and honorable gentleman.

But if his statements need corroboration, we have abundance of it. There is appended to this diary, the following statement:

"APRIL 25, 1862.

"The undersigned hereby certify that most of the facts above set forth are correct from their (our) own knowledge, and that Col. Worthington's re-

marks and anticipations are in correspondence with his general conversation for ten days before the battle of the 6th of April, 1862.

William Smith, Major 46th Regt., O. V. I.
 J. W. Heath, Capt. Co. A., " "
 A. G. Sharp, Capt. Co. B., " "
 John Weisman, Capt. Co. C., " "
 Ed. N. Upton, Lt. Commanding Co. D. O. V. I.
 M. C. Lilley, Capt. Co. H., 46th Reg., O. V. I.
 C. C. Lybrand, Capt. Co. I., " " "
 I. N. Alexander, Capt. Co. K. 46th Regt., O. V. I.

I know that when the knowledge of the existence of this diary reached Gen. Sherman, he contrived to make Col. Worthington's position so uncomfortable, that the Colonel was compelled to withdraw from the service. But that does not impair the value of his statement.

You claim that the officers to whom I referred in my letter to Gen. Sherman, have failed to sustain me, but have endorsed Gen. Sherman's conduct at the battle of Shiloh. Let us see how far you are correct in this. You quote General Halleck's letter to the Secretary of War, giving Gen. Sherman the credit for saving the fortunes of the day at Shiloh by his courage and gallantry. Who ever denied it? I certainly did not. On the contrary I said in my letter to Gen. Sherman that on account of his gallantry and courage in the battle, I had omitted his name in my letter to the *Mac-a-Cheek Press*, charging negligence on the commanding officers. Let us have no evasions, no change of the issue.

I have not said that any of the officers whom I named, named Gen. Sherman as being personally guilty of negligence, any more than I did in my letter. But neither Gen. Halleck nor Gen. McCook nor any other General named in my letter to General Sherman, have said, and will not say, that the attack of Sunday morning, April 6th, was not a surprise, and that some one or more of the commanding officers were guilty of gross negligence. I did not say it was Gen. Sherman, and the officers to whom I have referred did not say so.

I have no doubt but Gen. McCook spoke in high terms of Gen. Sherman's gallantry on Sunday the 6th, in presence of his brother Daniel, as he certainly did in my presence on the Sunday after the battle. And I did not use his name as charging negligence on Gen. Sherman.

I said in my letter to General Sherman: "If you wish to know the opinion of men who are competent judges of the *question at issue between us, &c.*" What was the question at issue between us?

It was whether our army was surprised at Shiloh on Sunday, April 6th! Whether there was negligence on the part of any of our Generals in suffering themselves to be surprised. Not whether Gen. Sherman was the officer chargeable with it.

You quote Gen. Boyle, Gen. Nelson and Gen. Rosseau in support of Gen. Sherman's gallantry and courage, which has not been called in question.

Gen. Rosseau says in his after dinner speech at Louisville, that Gen. Sherman was not surprised, and that no man could surprise him. The terms of extravagant eulogy used by Gen. Rosseau, are of themselves sufficient to show that he spoke somewhat at random, and probably would not desire to be held to a rigid literal construction of his language.

Now, sir, permit me to say, that the officers to whom I referred were not named at random, without knowing something of their opinions on the question in controversy. One of them prepared charges of negligence and misconduct to present to the Secretary of War against one of the commanding officers. He exhibited them to me, and told me that he had shown them to other officers whom he named, who said they agreed with him as to the truth of the charges, but advised a little delay to see what action the Department would take in the matter, of its own motion.

Another said in the most emphatic terms that the attack was a surprise, which was the result of gross negligence, that the commanding officers ought to be court martialed and shot. I do not propose to bring them into conflict with Gen. Sherman by giving their names, or get up any issue or veracity about it.

As I have already said, there was on my first visit to Shiloh, which was on the Sunday after the battle, but one opinion on the subject in the army. And I did not then suppose that the officers in command would deny the surprise.

When I returned some ten days later, I learned that the officers were denying that there was a surprise. And it was upon this occasion that Col. Leggett maintained in a conversation of some length that there was no surprise. And I now repeat what I have already said that he is the only man of the hundreds that I conversed with in the Army, that entertained that opinion. And what I could not but regard as a little remarkable, was, that he was selected to represent the State of Ohio in a Court of Inquiry that was got up by the commanding officers. You say the soldiers who fought so bravely have no quarrel with their Generals, and need no defence.

Don't deceive yourself. There is not a man who fought in the ranks at Shiloh on that bloody Sabbath, who does not believe that there ought to have been some means of defence provided, entrenchments, rifle-pits, or abattis. that would have enabled them to repel the enemy without encountering the hardships and the horrors of that, and the succeeding day, and the intervening night. The thousands of brave men who were maimed and mutilated for life in that battle, will not forget that they are suffering for the negligence of men whose duty it was to care for them, and watch over them, and warn them of the approach of danger, and furnish them the best means of defence.

The tens of thousands of widows and orphans, and bereaved fathers and mothers, whose husbands and fathers and sons are mouldering upon the banks of the Tennessee, have a fearful reckoning to settle with those whose ignorance or negligence has hurried their relatives to premature and untimely graves. You forget of what manner of men our Army is composed. The great mass of them are educated and intelligent farmers and mechanics, who have gone into the military service from motives of the purest patriotism, and not for the paltry consideration of thirteen dollars per month. Every man of them does his own thinking. There are thousands of them in the ranks who are the equals of the Generals by whom they are commanded in every thing but mere military rank, and perhaps military science and experience.

So far as my intercourse has extended with the bravest and best of the rank and file of that army, the opinion is universal that the attack on Sunday the 6th of April, was a surprise, which is justly chargeable to the negligence of the Generals who commanded it. I know that the influence of your name and character will do much to establish a different opinion. But permit me to say, to you, that you have undertaken a task that is beyond your strength, Herculean and gigantic as it may be. So wide-spread and deep-seated is the conviction, that thousands of brave men were sacrificed to the negligence and misconduct of their officers, that no human power can change it. You have suffered your personal feelings to warp your judgment, and you are attempting to sustain an error, a delusion, a sham, that is got up to shield gentlemen who wear stars upon their shoulders, from merited condemnation and disgrace. *You cannot accomplish it.*

Very Respectfully, Yours, &c.,

B. STANTON.

BELLEFONTAINE, Dec. 4. 1862.

HON. THOMAS EWING—SIR :—Since the pamphlet edition of my letter of Nov. 4, was in the hands of the printer, I have received your reply to it as published in the *Mac-a-Cheek Press*.

As I am not ambitious of the honors of authorship, which you and Gen. Sherman seem determined to force upon me, I pass over your verbal criticisms as matters in which the public can feel no special interest. You assume that I have abandoned the question of surprise.

In this you are entirely mistaken. It furnishes an excuse for ignoring to the overwhelming and conclusive evidences of surprise, to which your attention was specially invited, and therefore I am not surprised at the assumption.

I desire to correct an error which you have fallen into, and upon which your whole argument in reply to the proofs of surprise upon Col. Hildebrand's Brigade, rests. At page 9 of your reply, you say: "On Col. Hildebrand's left, was Col. Stewart, with the 2d Brigade." It is undoubtedly true that Col. Stewart with the 2d Brigade was to the left of Col. Hildebrand's Brigade. But your letter is so carelessly written as to leave the impression that Col. Stewart's Brigade was next to, and adjoining Col. Hildebrand on the left, and your argument proceeds upon this assumption. Now, the truth is, that the whole of Gen. Prentiss' Division was between Col. Stewart and Col. Hildebrand, and that the distance between Col. Stewart's right wing and Col. Hildebrand's left, must have been about one mile and a half. Hence you will see that your assumption, that the firing with shell spoken of in Col. Hildebrand's report, before his Brigade was drawn up in line of battle, is the same spoken of by Col. Stewart's report, is a great mistake. With this correction of your letter of the 19th ult., I am entirely willing to rest the controversy, and submit it to the judgment of a candid and enlightened community.

Very Respectfully, Yours, &c.,

B. STANTON.

P. S. Since the foregoing was in type, I have read the following letter from C. Whittlesey, late of the 20th O. V. I., who commanded a Brigade in Gen. Lew Wallace's Division, at the battle of Shiloh. It will be recollected that Gen. Wallace's Division was at

Crump's Landing, six miles below Pittsburg Landing, at the commencement of the battle on Sunday morning, and did not reach the battle ground until Sunday evening.

Col. Whittlesey is a graduate of West Point, with a large experience, and one of the most intelligent and efficient officers in the service.

B. STANTON.

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH—WAS IT A SURPRISE?

CLEVELAND, O., Nov. 22, 1862.

HON. B. STANTON, Lt. Gov., Bellefontaine, Ohio:

DEAR SIR:—To reply fully to the enquiries of yours dated the 7th inst., will require considerable space. Immediately after the unfortunate battle of Shiloh, reports became current prejudicial to the reputation of Gen. W. T. Sherman.

The General has replied in person, and his personal friends in high positions have more than once undertaken his defence with great zeal and ability. They charge our disasters to the cowardice of 10,000 of our citizen soldiers. The public seems to believe them due to negligence; with many, the criminal negligence, of a General or Generals. This is the issue. Historians find it a difficult task to arrive at the truth, respecting battles. In this case, as it is a recent affair, we may have access to the personal statements of witnesses; the private letters of those present; the public correspondence of newspapers; and the official reports and bulletins. All these are entitled to consideration. Official reports are not the only credible sources of information. I have not been able to procure Document No. 66, published by the Senate, and have not before me all of the reports of the Generals. Whatever there is in Document 66 favorable to his view of the case is no doubt made available by Mr. Ewing in his letter to you.

The command to which I belonged did not reach the field until nearly dark on Sunday, and therefore I cannot speak from observation in reference to the attack on that morning. After examining the ground during the next fortnight, I am free to state that my conclusions were that due preparation had not been made to meet the impending attack. What officer is most to blame, if this conclusion is correct, or among what Generals the blame should be divided, is not easily determined. The affair and its results are of too much consequence to slacken in the pursuit of the truth, whether it effects one or many.

A fortnight previous, Gen. Grant's corps consisted of 43,768 infantry and 4,814 cavalry and artillery. A sixth division under Brig. Gen. Prentiss had been added to the camp at Pittsburg Landing; and Gen. Wallace's Division was at Crump's Landing, six miles below on the same bank of the river.

The five Divisions, encamped around Pittsburg on Sunday morning may have varied in strength from 35,000 to 40,000. As I have seen no official statement I can give it only by estimate. Whatever it was, all this force came frightfully near being annihilated. At 6 p. m. of Sunday, as Gen. Buell's advance reached the ground, very few of the Brigades retained their organization. The camps of four Divisions were in the possession of the enemy, and a large part of the corps in confusion and dismay were

crowding the river banks below the bluffs. The rebels were so near the Landing that a building on the crest of the bluff above it, is well marked with their musket shots. Our two gunboats were then enabled to attack on our left; and Gen. Ammon's Brigade came up the hill just in time to save our batteries.

Prentiss and his Division were captured, and a large part of the 2d Division (Gen. C. F. Smith's) was also taken. So much of this misfortune as could be remedied by the re-occupation of our camps and the retreat of the enemy was effected the next day.

But 13,763 men had been placed *HORS DU COMBAT*; of whom 1,735 lay dead on the field. SEVEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO more, maimed and injured in various degrees, were many of them still upon the ground, suffering, bleeding and dying under a remorseless sky, from which cold rains frequently fell upon them. The remainder were in the hands of the enemy. These men were American citizens comprising the best talent, intelligence, blood and virtue of the nation. Was this sacrifice necessary? Was the cause of the Union benefited or improved, by an engagement which strewed that field with so many men and horses? Has the national reputation gained or lost? If the catastrophe was inevitable, or if the cause derived a corresponding advantage, the friends of our departed soldiers would have grieved but would not have complained. If their loss was unnecessary, it makes little difference how it was brought about; whether by a technical "surprise," or by a want of proper preparation which enters into the definition of a surprise.

The enemy was concentrated at Corinth, a place about 25 miles south of our camp, where he was fortified. A railway existed in running order from thence west to Memphis, on the Mississippi—also southerly to all parts of the State of Mississippi, and to Mobile. Gen. A. S. Johnson, one of their ablest officers, was in command, with Beauregard as his first subordinate. His strength was variously reported at 50, 70, 100 and 150,000; but whatever it was our commanding General must have known. In twenty-four hour's time it could be precipitated upon our lines. It had a fortified position to fall back upon, and railways by which to escape. We had five Divisions in an open camp with a river at their backs. What was good policy in the enemy under these circumstances? What would have been good policy on our part, even without other indications or warnings?

During the week previous to the battle reconnoitering parties, scouts and pickets of the enemy were close upon our lines. What did this indicate? General Sherman was placed in front, and says in his report that a skirmish took place on the 4th of April, in which his pickets were driven in at one and one-half miles from his headquarters. Buell had been ordered by Gen. Halleck from Nashville to the Tennessee, but no part of his force had arrived. Gen. Beauregard states that their force moved from Corinth on the third at one o'clock in the morning, consisting of three corps, under Polk, Bragg, and Hardee. Breckinridge had a fourth corps as a reserve. In this state of affairs, were any preparations made to strengthen our position at Shiloh by artificial works? Were our advanced guards increased in strength, as is usual in such cases, to meet the first shock of the enemy's advancing columns? Were any intrenchments made to shield our raw troops from the impetuosity of an attack, or to protect the artillery? What advantages the ground has for such defenses will be noticed further on. It is certain that no commanding positions were taken in front, and no efforts made to embarrass the enemy until he reached our lines. Gen. Beauregard states that their army rested on Saturday night at the forks of the Hamburg and Pittsburg road, three miles from Shiloh. Their movements had been greatly delayed by rains and the consequent bad roads of a clayey soil. There is much to show that during the night large bodies of troops approached nearer than the forks of the road.

A large bivouac was observed by us after the battle, not more than a mile and a half in our front. Trains led to it from the west and south-west, made by regiments moving through the brush.

Capt. Alexander, of the 46th Ohio Volunteers, stated to me that, being on picket duty, he saw at daylight of the sixth masses of men to his left nearer the camp than he was. His position was in front of our right. Dr. T. M. Carey, one of our surgeons who was captured near Shiloh on Sunday, has published a letter in the Cincinnati Commercial, wherein he says: "Breakfast was had, with our usual self-security, about 6½ a. m., little thinking that just beyond the ravine (in front), in the woods, lay a formidable enemy in full force. At daybreak on Sunday they were in sight of our camps, and Gen Johnson remarked to Gen. Beauregard, 'Can it be possible they are not aware of our presence?' Beauregard replied, 'It is scarcely possible; they are laying some plan to entrap us.'"

New Orleans papers of the 4th, which were found on the prisoners, stated that on the 4th of April Gen. Grant would be attacked.

Gen. Sherman says that our pickets were driven in on Friday, the 4th, and that on Saturday the enemy were "very bold, coming well down to our front, yet I did not believe he designed anything but a strong demonstration." General Grant passing Crump's Landing on his way down on Friday evening after the skirmish is reported by an officer to have said it was only evidence of a close reconnoissance and not of an attack.

This agrees with an extract published in the Cincinnati Gazette from a private letter of Gen. Grant's.

Such was the state of affairs up to Saturday night. General Sherman's position was the most responsible of all the Generals present on the field. Gen. Grant's headquarters were at Savannah, where Buell was expected to report. Neither of them knew the close proximity of the enemy or expected a serious attack. To Gen. Sherman particularly was confided the protection and defense of his line, and the paramount duty of **KNOWING** what was going on in front.

Early in the morning, according to the Athens Messenger, of April 24th, a messenger was sent from the advanced guards to Gen. Sherman advising him that the rebels were advancing in force, to which he replied, in a jocose manner, that "they must be frightened out there."

On this point his own expressions are: "About 8 a. m., I saw glittering bayonets of masses of infantry in the woods to our left front, beyond a small stream (Oak Run) and then became **SATISFIED FOR THE FIRST TIME** that the enemy designed a determined attack upon our whole camp."

General Grant and his friends assert that after the firing had commenced at Shiloh, on Sunday, which was heard at Crump's Landing and at Savannah, he considered it a feint; and that if attacked we should find the real point of attack to be upon Adamsville. Our pickets were driven in between 6:30 and 7 o'clock a. m. In this state of affairs the battle opens. What were the preparations for such an event? It matters little to the nation or reputation of our arms, whether we are defeated by an enemy suddenly springing upon us from a jungle, opening an unexpected fire upon the General in person, or whether it is because we were found **UNPREPARED** to meet him.

The accompanying maps, which I made on the ground, will give a much better idea of the country than can be had by description. The general course of the Tennessee river at Pittsburg Landing is westerly soon changing its course northward. The battlefield lies on the south shore, covering the undulating upland between two mill streams. Lick Creek enters the river about the same distance above that Snake Creek does below the Landing. They are three and-a-half or four miles apart, and nearly parallel. The soil and sub-soil is of red clay to unknown depths, forming bluffs along the river, about one hundred feet above high-water. These creeks and all branches, however minute, have worn deep and precipitous channels into the clay. Most of this region is covered with an original growth

of oak, not very close, but a dense growth of underbrush of oak and hickory has come up among the more ancient timber. The general surface is level without hills, but with a multitude of valleys of excavation which are generally filled with standing timber and brush. About a mile back of the Landing is a small stream that runs nearly parallel with the river westward, entering Snake Creek just above where the road from Crump's Landing heads with this little stream. A rivulet with several branches crosses it, and cutting a gap through the river bluffs enters it above the Landing. The gunboats were opposite this ravine and fired through it upon the enemy's right in the afternoon. Further south another small creek, sometimes called "Oak Run," runs westerly, in front of Sherman's line, emptying into Owl Creek, a branch of Snake Creek, near the Purdy road. The valley of Snake Creek is swampy and impassable for artillery. From the heads of Oak Run to the east are the knobs and ravines of Lick Creek. Gen. Prentiss' division occupied this space on the left of General Sherman. In this country the roads are very crooked and in poor repair. They pass irregularly from farm to farm through the woods. There are, however, two routes, called main roads, that pass through the field of Shiloh. One comes from the west at Purdy, crossing Owl Creek, passing in rear of Shiloh Church and over Lick Creek to Hamburg. The other leads from Pittsburg Landing, southerly, past the Church towards Corinth. A great many minor paths and roads intersect the ground. Much more of the country is still covered with standing timber and thicket, than is in cultivation. There is no point from which the whole field, or any considerable part of it, is visible at once.

Major General Smith's Division lay near the Landing, in command of Brigadier General W. H. Wallace, on account of the sickness and absence of its Chief. About a mile in rear were the divisions of Hurlburt and McClelland, in an irregular line on or near the waters of the little stream first described, McClelland on the right. The Corinth road passed between them. The second Brigade of Gen. Sherman's command, under Col. Stuart, of Illinois, was detached to guard the fords of Lick Creek, at the extreme left of our line. In front of the space between Prentiss' right and Sherman's left, was the 53d Ohio, Col. Appler, half a mile distant.

The valley in front, and most of the country, is in timber, more or less dense. From this timber, and the ravines extending from Owl Creek to Lick Creek, the enemy opened fire nearly at the same moment. He was massed along that whole line, within musket range, and the senior General present did not know it, and did not expect a general engagement. I am unable to say what Gen. Prentiss' expectations were. An officer of General Grant's staff, writing to the Cincinnati Commercial on the 21st of April, says that one of Gen. Prentiss' officers told him that he was sent out early in the morning, on the Corinth road, with two companies of men, to make a reconnoissance. He met our pickets, driven in, about a mile from our front. It is not necessary for your purposes to go into details of the action.

Considering the suddenness of the attack, and the fact that the troops first assailed had never been under fire, that they had no breastworks, abattis or other protection, that the enemy's artillery opened first, and from cover, it is hazarding very much to call them to an account.

Col. Hildebrand, commanding the third brigade, reports that his pickets (the 53d Ohio) were fired upon early in the morning, and shortly after 7 o'clock the enemy appeared in force, opening upon his camp a heavy fire, followed up rapidly with shell. He formed the 57th and 77th Ohio, who advancing encountered the enemy in force, within three hundred yards of his camp. In a private letter, published in the Marietta Intelligencer, he states they held this ground FOUR HOURS, against four times their number.

Gen. Prentiss' command was driven back, but was not captured until after 5 o'clock in the afternoon. This was after the centre of our second line had been broken, on the left of McClelland.

The fourth brigade, Col. Buckland, and the first, Col. McDowell, of Sherman's Division, remained in line until between 10 and half past 10 a. m., which they left under orders. Although overwhelmed by numbers, and retreating, the fighting was kept up without intermission until night. On ground so rough and complicated, maneuvers were of course difficult. The commanders of regiments could seldom see their whole command at once. Orders were communicated with difficulty. The enemy's artillery was superior to our own, yet they were forced to bring their reserves into action early in the day, every corps and regiment being engaged. Under these circumstances it requires very high authority to call in question the bravery of ten thousand of our soldiers. Under the crushing power of such an outset, could the line have been held by the same number of veteran troops?

As a subject of military criticism, the following points are to be considered:

1st. If the rebel Generals were wise, should they not have determined upon an attack of Grant's corps, precisely as they did, to come off on Friday or Saturday before Buell arrived?

2d. Should not a prudent General have anticipated such an attack under the circumstances?

3d. Was there good reason to suppose that a General of reputation, like Johnson would pass our main army, and fall upon one Division of it, several miles more distant, and ten miles nearer to Buell's advance?

4th. If an attack was not expected on theoretical grounds, should not a great movement of the enemy, commenced on the night of the 2d and 3d of April, have been known at our lines by the 4th of April?

5th. If it was not known, should not the demonstrations of Friday and Saturday, have been considered a sufficient hint of the enemy's intentions?

6th. Between Friday and Sunday, would not a prudent and skillful General have improved the time to strengthen his front, slashing the timber in and beyond the ravines that protected his line, covering his artillery by earth works, and his infantry by rifle pits?

7th. If the attack had been made, as the rebels contemplated, on or before the 5th of April, would not Gen. Grant's corps have been entirely destroyed?

This letter has become more lengthy than I expected, but without even now giving a full response to the questions propounded by you.

Very Respectfully, Yours, &c.,

CHAS. WHITTLESEY.

730 69 in 12 attch. 1146

LETTER

OF

LIEUT. GOV. STANTON,

IN REPLY TO

HON. THOS. EWING.

COLUMBUS:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE OHIO STATE JOURNAL.

1862.

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